THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONALITY DIMENSIONS AND EMPLOYEE JOB COMMITMENT IN PRIVATE HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

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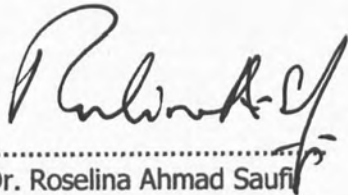
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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONALITY DIMENSIONS AND EMPLOYEE JOB COMMITMENT IN PRIVATE HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUIONS

Research on personality dimensions and employees' job commitment has not yet broad especially in the context of private higher learning institutions in Kota Kinabalu. Therefore, the objectives of this study are to examine the relationship between personality dimensions that affect job commitment and to determine whether gender differences and job level will influences employee job commitment. In this study, there are several aspects under personality dimensions that might be important in the area of employees' job commitment. According to the researcher's review on previous researches, there are few types of personality aspects that have been mentioned and explained. Among the types that might be contribute and could be relate to employee job commitment are extroversion, agreeableness, openness to experience, conscientiousness and neuroticism. In line with that, all the questionnaires have been analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and there are 144 respondents from managerial and non managerial level has been chosen to answer the question. After conducting this research through few analyses, only conscientiousness has significant relationship with job commitment. In this study also, one of the moderator which is the job level also indicate the significance relationship between personality dimensions and employees' job commitment.

ABSTRAK

Kajian mengenai hubungan di antara dimensi personaliti dan komitmen kerja dari konteks institut pengajian tinggi swasta adalah tidak meluas khasnya di Kota Kinabalu. Oleh yang demikian, antara objektif utama kajian ini ialah untuk mengenal pasti hubungan di antara jenis-jenis personaliti dan komitmen terhadap kerja. Selain daripada itu, faktor jantina dan level pekerjaan turut dikenalpasti sama ada mempengaruhi komitmen terhadap kerja di kalangan pekerja. Terdapat beberapa aspek personaliti yang dianggap penting khasnya dari sudut komitmen kerja. Berdasarkan beberapa kajian yang lepas, didapati bahawa terdapat beberapa jenis dimensi personaliti yang dinyatakan. Antara jenis personaliti yang mampu menyumbang dan menghubungkan dengan komitmen kerja ialah bersifat sosial (extroversion), berpendapat sama (agreeableness), mempunyai sikap terbuka (openness to experience), kesedaran (conscientiousness) dan gangguan emosi (neuroticism). Segala data yang diperoleh telah dianalisis dengan menggunakan Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) dan seramai 144 responden dari bahagian pengurusan dan bukan pengurusan telah dipilih untuk kajian ini. Setelah kajian dijalankan, didapati bahawa hanya kesedaran (conscientiousness) mempunyai hubungan signifikan terhadap komitmen kerja. Selain daripada itu, level pekerjaan turut menyatakan wujudnya hubungan signifikan di antara dimensi personaliti dan komitmen kerja.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0   Introduction

In developing and understanding people from the perspective of management, it is vital for organizations to recognize individuals' knowledge, skills, attitudes and capabilities that will add value to organizations. All these aspects could drive to the organization performance by having the three criteria of sustainable competitive advantage through its people especially.

First and foremost, the human resources must be value to organization. This can be done by ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness within the people. For instance, having qualified people or best talent would help organization to operate the task much better. They are able to see clearly a big picture in the whole organization and they know what they are doing. However, failure to understand the importance of these elements, it would be difficult to get expected outcomes and complicated to achieve high work productivity especially from the people itself.

In line with that, according to David (2007), the criteria of high value human resources must be rare to ensure the organization will have the value and get a high return in a long run. This refers to the people skills, knowledge, abilities and personality that are difference from other people especially. Each people come in different background and have their own specialties. This uniqueness will help the people to become creative and innovative especially in solving the difficult task especially when it comes to the critical part. Finally, the other criteria of human

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resources are it must be difficult to imitate. From this view, people capabilities cannot be copied by others. Even though the capabilities, talent and personality cannot be copied, but it can be combined to create a new task so that they can be more explorative and receptive towards the situation in an organization.

In discussing further, human capital or intellectual capital can be perceived as a unique concept. This is because it can be categorized as intangible asset and cannot be managed easily such as jobs, products and technologies. Here means, it is all about the people and not the organization. For example, if valued employees or skilled people leave the organization, they will take the human capital such skills, knowledge, attitudes and capabilities with them together and any investment that has been made in the organization are lost. In order to sustain the high value of human capital, the organization need to develop an excellent people by continuously cultivate and enhance several elements among their employees in terms of staffing program and training program.

For instance, staffing programs will focus on the first phase of identifying, recruiting and hiring the best talent. From that, it will follow by the training programs to harmonize the staffing practices in providing the skill development especially in the area that cannot be moved to another organization (Bohlander & Snell, 2004). In other words, human capital is a utilization of human being in workplace to achieve organizational goals.

As noted earlier, to relate with all above, one of the part of strategic planning in human resource is mapping the organization's human capital. Here means, when the researcher looks at the strategic value of a person's skills and personality, as well as the uniqueness, the researcher will discover that organizations has consist of different

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kinds of employees who have different kinds of skills, talents and personality. In this context, the organizations would manage all of these employees the same way even though it might difficult. These are the main reasons why personality is very important in human capital perspective especially when it comes to the contribution towards the job. In other words, it is all about managing people and their character in a workplace.

To sum up all the above, the role of personality in human capital decisions could be seen clearly in personality job adaptability. This means that, people will not be productive or not satisfied if there is a mismatch or imbalance between who they are and what they are doing.

1.1 Background of Malaysian's Private Institutions of Higher Learning

There are much number of universities and colleges that have been set up in order to support the tertiary education in Malaysia. The main objective is to provide teaching quality so that it can prepare for human resources needs in the various sectors of development (Arokiasamy *et al.*, 2009).

Institutions of higher learning in Malaysia can be categorized into two areas; public institutions and private institutions. As stated by Arokiasamy *et al.* (2009) , public higher learning institutions are fully controlled and managed by federal government. According to the statistic by Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), currently there are twenty public higher learning institutions established between 1962 and 2007 (MOHE, 2008).

Private Higher Learning Institutions (PHLI) in Malaysia can be divided into two categories namely university status and non-university status. These include private colleges, private universities, universities colleges, foreign universities branch

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campuses and distance learning centers. These private education is financed by private sectors such shareholder funds, students' fees and some business activities that could support the operation.

As discussed earlier, the private higher learning institutions (PHLI) has been choose in conducting this study because of fast development of educational sector in competing with public higher learning institutions. Other than that, the growing numbers of PHLI also look encouraging since it will enhance the population of tertiary education in Malaysia generally.

Table 1 below shows the statistic of private higher learning institutions in Malaysia from 1994 until 2008.

Table 1: Statistic of PHLI until 31st December 2008

Private Higher Learning Institutions (Private universities, private colleges, university colleges and branch campuses)	
University	19
University Colleges	18
Branch campuses	4
Colleges	443
Total	474

Source: Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), 2008

In addition, below are the lists of private higher learning institutions in Kota Kinabalu that registered under Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE).

1. AMC The School of Business

2. Institut Prima Bestari

3. Institut Sains dan Pengurusan

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4. Institut Seni Sabah

5. Institut Sinaran

6. Institut Teknologi Suria

7. Kinabalu Commercial College

8. INTI College Sabah

9. Almacrest International College

10. Kolej ATI (Institut Pelancongan ASIA)

11. Eastern College

12. Kolej Masterskill Kampus Metro Kota Kinabalu

13. Multimedia College

14. PTPL College

15. Kolej Sains Kesihatan Aseana

16. Institut Pengurusan Dinamik (SIDMA College)

17. Kolej Teknologi Antarabangsa Cosmopoint

18. Kolej Universiti Teknologi Antarabangsa Twintech (IUCTT)

19. Kolej Yayasan Sabah (KYS)

20. Kolej Antarabangsa Bandaraya

(Source: Ministry of Higher Education, 2008)

1.2   Research Problem

In today's climate which is more competitive, to attract and to retain the good employees are quite difficult especially in looking further on individual personality and the degree of commitment towards the job. This is because personality plays a vital role in developing employee job commitment so that they could produce a greater outcome later.

In line with that, the major problem that can be seen within this context especially in private higher learning institutions (PHLI) are the drastic changes on employee attitudes and their personality has affect the job as well as workplace. For instance, some of the employees are lack of social involvement, being reluctance to the new ideas and lack of self discipline. When these happen, it has decreased the level of commitment among them which has influence their job also. At the end, they are not achieving the standard of requirement in accomplishing the task. Other than that, most of the evidence such as having an exposure to layoff or any kind of risk that occurred in organization has led to the erosion of organization loyalty by many employees. So, this is an issue that needs to be discuss further in this study.

To discuss the above research problem in depth, the researcher chooses private higher learning institutions (PHLI) as a field of study. Not much research that has been conducted in relating the personality dimensions towards the job commitment among employees especially in private higher learning institutions (PHLI). Most of existing studies are about relating personality with employees' psychological contracts (Tallman & Bruning, 2008), personality effects in career success (Lau & Shaffer, 1999), personality and leadership (Sieff, 2009; Hautala, 2006; Washington et. al., 2006; LaPrairie; 2007).

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In addition, with different of job level and gender of the employees, it will help to link and relate personality dimensions towards job commitment in their workplace so that it can be explained and discussed well.

In order to solve these issues, thus the research questions are:

a) To examine what are the relationship between personality dimensions and employee job commitment?

b) To determine what are the relationship between gender and job level that could be related between personality dimensions and employee job commitment?

1.3 Objectives of Study

The general objective is to gain understanding about the importance of personality dimensions and job commitment. However, the specific objectives of this study are:

a) To examine the relationship between personality dimensions that affect job commitment.

b) To determine whether the gender and job level will influence employees' job commitment.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This research is one of the types of cross sectional and quantitative study where the data will be collected through questionnaire and it will be distributed at one time.

In addition, the researcher will focus on regression analysis by examine the relationship between personality dimensions, types of personality dimensions and employees' job commitment. The researcher has proposed private higher learning

institutions in Kota Kinabalu as a place to conduct this study. As mentions earlier, the main purpose by choosing the private higher learning institutions is because of rapid development in educational sector especially in private higher learning institutions (PHLI) in competing with public higher learning institutions. Plus, the increasing numbers of PHLI also look encouraging since it will boost up the population of tertiary education in Malaysia. Besides, the management styles in private institutions are more flexible and have put less importance on rules and regulations. As a result, the employees have opportunity to challenge their skills, attitudes, personality and capabilities. In other words, this study will look into the association between dependent variables, independent variables, and moderated variables.

Apart from that, the self-administered questionnaire will be distributed among employees at private higher learning institutions (PHLI) and the respondents will be evaluated in all levels in terms of managerial and non-managerial level. The selection of respondent is based on stratified sampling method with target population is about 200 employees at all private higher learning institutions in Kota Kinabalu.

In this study, the researcher has used stratified sampling as a sampling technique to collect all data. This is because the population will be separate into sub-populations or strata. For example, the researcher has divided the employees in private higher learning institutions (PHLI) into few sub-groups such as managerial employees which include chief operating officer, managers and head of department. The other sub-group is referring to non-managerial employees who work in the operational level. The importance of this technique is to measure whether the job level could influence the respondents' commitment towards their job itself. Besides, it would help the researcher to get good statistical efficiency in analyzing the data.

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1.5　Rationale and Significance of the Study

The finding from this study would be beneficial to private higher learning institutions (PHLI) especially to focus on personality dimensions in the aspect of human capital. Meaning to say, by having a good combination of personality traits, the employees will produce a greater productivity and be committed in their job. For instance, the employees will be aware and know the good personality traits that could drive them toward accomplishing the job. At the end, this will lead to the effectiveness of its people also by being more efficient in applying the management practices. For example, all the work process will be done smoothly according to the flow because the employees know their duty and responsibility towards the job.

Apart from that, the other significance of this study is it will improve the individual performance by aligning the organizational goals and objectives. For example, to be an established and successful organization, the first thing must start within the people or employee itself. This can be illustrates when the employees know their direction in the organization, then it will help the organization to achieve the goals easily. In contrast, if the employees have negative traits, it will not help the organization to be better than others and could not sustain in a long run. So, here means, the study of personality dimensions towards employee job commitment plays a crucial role in developing people.

1.6 Definition of Terms

To avoid confusion on some of the terms that will be discussed, the following terms will be explained further.

1.6.1 Personality Dimensions

Personality is defined as individual's preferred way of behaving, thinking and feeling (Saville *et al.*, 1984). The Five Factor Model or big five personality represent a framework to describe the human personality in a comprehensive way. It consists of the following traits such extroversion, openness, neuroticisms, agreeableness and conscientiousness (Goldberg, 1990).

These five broads' domains or dimensions have been discovered to define human personality at the highest level of organizations (Goldberg, 1993). The big five traits are also referred to as the Five Factor Model of FFM (Costa & McCrae, 1992), and as a Global Factors of personality. In this study, the researcher would investigate and examine these personality dimensions further in the aspect of occupational settings. This has brought the researcher to propose on the relationship among the Big Five and job commitment.

Extroversion

It refers to the tendencies towards energy, positive emotions, sociability and assertiveness. People within this personality tend to be enthusiastic and more on action oriented. They would like and prefer to talk, assert and draw attention to themselves. They also seek opportunity from external world. Besides, they have a desire for achievement, competitiveness, desire for advancement, be initiative and

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could influence others, risk taking and taking charge or control the situations (Niehoff, 2006; Leung & Bozionelos, 2004; Guthrie *et. al.,* 2003; Robie *et. al.,* 2005;). For instance, *"I feel comfortable around people", "I start conversations",* and *"I talk to a lot of different people at parties", "For me, change is exciting", "I like to win, even if the activity is not very important", "I would like to attain the highest position some day", "I actively take control of situations at work if no one is",* and *"I prefer to set challenging goals".*

Agreeableness

It refers to the tendency to be cooperative, compassionate, trust others, sensitive and unselfish. It also reflect individual differences by getting along with others and generally this type of person would like to help people, generous and willing to cooperate their interest with others. Besides, it is all about the consideration, empathy, interdependence and thought agility (Niehoff, 2006; Leung & Bozionelos, 2004; Guthrie *et. al.,* 2003; Robie *et. al.,* 2005). The example can be seen as *"I feel others' emotions", "I make people feel at ease", "I take time out for others", "I believe people are usually honest with me", "I think it is vital to consider other perspectives before coming to conclusions"* and *"I tend to put group goals first and individual goals second".*

Neuroticism

Neuroticism refers to the emotional instability such as the tendencies towards being tense, nervous, pessimism, anger, depression and anxiety. People in this dimension tend to be in a bad mood, frustrated and open to stress. When these happen

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